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ABSTRACT

The need for change in the way language is understood and treated in schools is discussed. It is important: (1) to see the need for knowledge of the language situations of the United States, (2) to support training and research to obtain such knowledge, and (3) to change the relationship between linguistics and education. The language situation of Black Americans, Native Americans, and Spanish-speaking Americans, uses of language and ethnic heritage, and the issue of bilingual education for communities of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and others are addressed. Initially in the field of linguistics, language structure was divorced from language use, but now language use is included by most along with language structure. A linguistics that is truly the science of language and a foundation for education will need to be part of the study of communicative interaction. Linguistic competence needs to be viewed as part of communicative competence, and the character of competence needs to be understood in relation to the social history and social structure that shape it in a given case. The concepts of inherent heterogeneity and hidden hegemony in relation to language problems are discussed. Equality of opportunity and the development of the fullest linguistic potential of the child are also addressed. (SW)

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LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION: FORWARD TO FUNDAMENTALS

JUNE 12, 1978

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Introduction

I have been asked to speak about imperatives for change—change in university settings such as this, and change in schooling generally. This I am glad to do. I believe profoundly in the need for change in the way we understand language, and in what we do with language in schools. I agreed to become Dean of the School of Education because of that belief. But let me pause. Some of you must suspect that you are about to hear another lecture from a self-appointed bearer of light to the benighted. Not so. Part of what we need to know in order to change is not now known to anyone; teachers are closer to part of it than most linguists. No one who gives priority in the study of language to the needs of education could consider present linguistics a region of the already saved, toward which educators must look for missionaries and redemption. I have argued against the mainstream in linguistics for years, precisely because it has been inadequate to study of the role of language in human life. It has made assumptions, adopted methods, accepted priorities that prevent the contribution to education that serious study of language should make.

There are serious scholarly reasons for critique of the mainstream in linguistics, reasons that draw on traditions of thought with roots in the anthropology of Sapir, the sociology of Marx, the linguistics and poetics of Jakobson, the literary criticism and rhetoric of Burke.[1] There are scientific problems internal to linguistics that cannot be solved without change in the foundations from which they are approached. But there are civic reasons for critique as well. One by one some of us find it intolerable to continue a linguistics defined in a way that divorces it from the needs of the society which supports us. The number of students of language sharing this outlook grows. The time is ripe for a relation between the study of language and the study of education that is one of partnership, not preaching.

Please do not misunderstand. To criticize linguistics is not to absolve education. The ability of schools to deal with the linguistic situation in the United States is severely limited. One often says, start where the child is, develop the child's full potential. To do that, linguistically, one must have knowledge of the ways of speaking of the community of which the child is part. Very little knowledge of this sort is available. Each of us has some insight into these things—some command of the ways of speaking; but each of us is a poor judge as well. Just because language is basic to so many other things, so presupposed, much of our speaking is out of

awareness; we may be ignorant of much of it, or even in good faith confidently misreport it. Things we are sure we never say may turn up on someone's tape; matters of more or less may be assimilated to a sense of all-or-nothing. Our impressions of the speech of others may be remarkably accurate for placing them, without our being aware that our own speech may contain some of the same features. Recently a linguist and anthropologist in Montreal recorded the speech of two friends, a man and a woman, each speaking sometimes in formal situations, sometimes in informal situations in which the colloquial French known as Joual was appropriate. She played samples to a distinguished Montreal audience. The audience heard four people, not two. It could not be convinced that there were only two, so strong were its preconceptions as to the categorical difference.

If we are to know objectively what speaking is like, there must be ethnographies of speaking, open to discovery of facts that are inconvenient for one's grammar, pedagogy, or social assumptions. Educators and linguists alike have been remiss in not thinking of such knowledge as needed. Where linguists have pursued intuitions and universal models that ignore the realities of speech communities and language use, many educators have pursued notions of language and correctness that have had the same effect. Why want to know more about something one already knew was not really 'language'? that one knew was 'wrong'?

All this leads me to believe that there are three primary imperatives for change.

First, to *see* the need for knowledge of the language situations of our country.

Second, to *support* training and research to obtain such knowledge.

Third, to *change* the relations between linguistics and education.

Let me elaborate on this last imperative for a moment. A new relation between linguistics and education may be basic to all the rest. The essential point is that the nature of the change that is needed is not one-sided or one way. Linguistics and educators should work together and change together. Only thus can research on language be relevant to the situations faced by schools.

I shall return to the relation between linguistics and education. Now let me try to give substance to the need for knowledge.

Wanting to Know

Certain goals on which we would probably agree should govern imperatives for change. The treatment of language in schools should help, not harm. It should help children, and through them their families and communities, to maintain and foster self-respect. It should be consonant with respect for diversity of background and aspirations. It should contribute to equality rather than inequality.

It is probably hard to keep from nodding to words like these. Such words are familiar and accepted. Yet we face assumptions and ignorance about language and contradict and work against such goals.

Consider a school in a community. What would you want to know, were you responsible for the linguistic aspect of the schooling there? There are many who would not think that there was much that they needed to know, even how to use the language of the children. Recently I was asked to a meeting at the Philadelphia School Board to help resist pressure to remove the requirement that a teacher in a TESOL class know the language of the children being taught English, that is, be able to communicate with them. Most teachers at the school in Madras, Oregon to which children from Warm Springs Indian Reservation go, do not think they need to know anything about the Indian languages in the homes from which the children

come, or the etiquette of speaking there. By and large, indeed, knowing languages and knowing about language is little valued in our country, if it involves acceptance of diversity. You and I may have no difficulty in understanding standard West Indian English, may even admire it—I think it myself the most lovely English I have heard. But the daughter of a family from Jamaica was just admitted to a state-affiliated university in Philadelphia on the condition that she take a course in English for foreign students. Have you not often heard a proper middle-class white say in exasperation to a cab-driver or voice on the phone, "Oh, I can't understand you", although the black or Spanish accent was entirely intelligible? Identification of the difference having closed the listener's ear?

When educated, concerned people want to know about language, what is it they are likely to want to know? A graduate student at my university reports that when she spoke recently to the group that supports her studies, their serious, well intentioned questions made assumptions about languages and their relations to human groups that a linguistics student could not even have imagined entertaining. Recently I was asked by a cultured voice on the phone to help with a program being planned for the Canadian Broadcasting System, to view French in Montreal in the light of similar situations in the United States and the Caribbean. I began helpfully naming friends who know about such things, when it came out that the premise of the program was that the French-speaking lower classes of Montreal could not think right because they could not speak right. (You can imagine the haste and confusion with which I withdrew the names and tried to dissociate myself from the whole thing).

These are merely recent instances that have impinged upon me in the course of a month or two. It is almost too painful to be a student of language attentive to such things—examples accumulate so readily of prejudice, discrimination, ignorance bound up with language. It makes one wonder if discrimination connected with language is not so pervasive as to be almost impervious to change, so deeply rooted as to almost preclude support for the asking of questions that might lead to change. To be sure, some may be sure that children would be fine if left alone, and be glad to learn what is wrong with schools. Others may be sure that schools are doing what is right, and be glad to learn what is wrong with children and the homes from which they come. It is hard to find people who sense a need to understand objectively the school child's communicative world, a world seriated into a multiplicity of contexts of situation and ways of speaking suitable to each, a world of a plurality of norms for selecting and grouping together features of a verbal style, of a plurality of situation-sensitive ways of interacting and interpreting meaning in terms of styles, such that a type of situation such as classroom interaction with a teacher or formal test-making has meaning in terms of its relation to the rest. Such that each involves a spoken or written genre that has a place in a series of such, a possibility of performance dependent on particular rules for commitment to performance. So that to understand the part of a verbal repertoire that appears in educational settings, one needs to be able to compare choices of communicative device and meaning, displays of communicative and cognitive ability, across a range of settings. So that to understand the part of a child's (or teacher's) ways of speaking one sees in school, one needs to understand the whole. One needs to do or to draw on linguistic ethnography.[3]

As you know, there is little done and little on which to draw. What I have sketched in general terms is what one might reasonably ask about if concerned with the role of language in schooling in another culture or country; expecting things to be strange, one wants to know. In a sense, we need to be able to stand back from our own situations so as to see them as strange and as needing to be known.

Black Americans, Native Americans, Spanish-Speaking Americans

I should not suggest that nothing at all is known or being done. Certainly there has been a good deal of attention in recent years to patterns of speech associated with some of the major groups that make up this diverse country. Yet the research is scattered and spotty with regard to both geography and class. The case of 'Black English' is instructive. In the 1960's the ways of speaking of Black Americans attracted attention. The research has been important in demonstrating the systematic, rule-governed nature of the vernacular spoken by many Blacks, as aginst notions of it as an incoherent corruption. Notions of Black children practically without language were shown to be functions of intimidating formal situations in schools, to be situational, not general. Some of this work helped as well to highlight the respects in which distinctive features of the vernacular point to the wider spectrum of Caribbean Creoles and their West African elements. Awareness grew of the place of the vernacular in peer group interaction against the background of Caribbean and African traditions of spoken artistry. Still, research focused mostly on the variety of speech most strikingly different from the public standard, the vernacular of adolescent urban males. Much less analytic attention was given to the speech of Black women, of preachers and ministers, of established upper-class families, or to the Caribbean and African background of elaborated 'talking sweet' and public oratory. And some explanations of what became known were so partial as to be false. Some linguists wished to treat the vernacular as only superficially different and formally derivative from standard English, for reasons having to do in part with convenient simplicity of a grammatical model. Others wished to treat the vernacular as so distinct that it might require its own textbooks. There are indeed places where people want their variety maintained independently in print from a closely related one (in Czechoslovakia Slovaks feel this way about the relation of their variety to Czech). In the United States such a conception fails to take into account the actual attitudes of many Black people who want the variety of English in the classroom, especially the written variety, to be the common standard. Still others drew from this isolated fact the inference that Blacks depreciated the vernacular, even speaking of 'self-hatred'. In point of fact, there is widespread acceptance of the vernacular variety at home and in informal situations generally;[4] it retains a special place even among Black students at a university such as Princeton. Yet sympathetic interpretations of Black speech can be inadequate too. Many come to know Black terms for uses of language, such as 'shucking' and 'jiving', and regard them entirely as an Afro-American ethnic heritage. Yet analogous genres of language use can be found among lower class white youths; and such ways of coping verbally may have their origin in subordinate social status as well as in ethnic tradition.

The relation between varieties and uses of English, on the one hand, and being Black, on the other, is complex and only beginning to be adequately known. The situation is little better with regard to other major groups. We think of Native Americans in terms of the many languages lost, and of efforts to maintain or revive those that remain. The relation of schools to these efforts is of the greatest importance. My own anger and passion about the treatment of language in schools comes largely from experience of local schools and educational research institutions that affect Indian people at Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon. But these situations must not be oversimplified. Indian Americans themselves may differ in their views as to what is best in terms of language. And aspects of language that are crucial to the success of Indian children may not involve the traditional Indian language at all. Where the Indian children are, linguistically, may not be an Indian language, but an

Indian variety of English. There are probably several dozen such Indian varieties of English in the United States. They play a significant social role. Someone who has been away, and who returns to a local community, must take up the local variety of English or be judged snobbish. Features of children's speech that seem individual errors may in fact reflect a community norm. They may reflect a carryover into English of patterns from an Indian language. In the English of Indians at Isleta pueblo, south of Albuquerque, New Mexico, a double negative contrasts with a single negative as a carryover of a contrast between two types of negation in the Isleta language. There are doubtless other such examples, but the fact is that Isleta English is the only form of Indian English carefully studied and reported on in print, and that only in the last few years.[6]

The language situation of an Indian community will be still more complex, in having standard as well as local vernacular English present, and a vernacular, even reduced, variety of an Indian language as well as or even instead of its 'classic' form. In the Southwest Spanish may be a factor as well. Yet we have hardly more than a few sketches of such cases. With Indians as with Blacks; research has not attempted to provide systematic knowledge of the language situation of the communities experienced by children. Research has focused not on social reality, but on the exotic. To say this is not to condemn study of traditional Indian languages. Much of my work continues to be devoted to the study of one group of languages, now nearing extinction. I and a colleague are the last to work intensively with fully fluent speakers, and like others in such a situation, we have obligations both to those who have shared their knowledge with us and to those who later will want access to it. The work has its contribution to make to respect and self-respect for Indian people. The disproportion between what most linguists do and what most needs to be done is not here. There have never been trained scholars enough, and much has been lost unrecorded in consequence. With all its wealth our country has sparsely supported knowledge of the language that first named the continent. The fact is telling. We have barely managed to study languages that fit our image of the noble Redman, let alone begun to notice the actual linguistic makeup of Indian communities.

The knowledge one needs to start where Indian children, any children, are goes beyond varieties of language, of course, to patterns of the use of language—customary community ways of answering questions, calling upon others, taking turns in conversation, speaking or remaining silent, giving instruction by verbal precept or observed example, all the ways in which etiquette of speaking and value of language may take distinctive shape. Many Indian children come to school, speaking only English, yet encounter difficulty, not because of language difference, but because of difference in patterns for the use of language. Children found 'shy' and non-talkative in class may be as talkative as any, if observed in situations where the rights and duties of speaking are those of the community from which they come. In such a case one needs to know not a language, but a community way of speaking.

The issue and language most prominent today are bilingual education and Spanish. I cannot attempt to treat this complex situation here, except to note that the general difficulty is the same. Too little is known as a basis for policy and practice in schools. The widespread resistence to such a thing indeed may cause bilingual education to be attacked as having failed before it will have had a chance to be understood and fairly tried. Efforts to provide equal educational opportunity to Spanish-speaking children must proceed with a minimum of information as to the Spanish the children speak, in relation to the varieties and uses of Spanish in the community from which they come. No simple general answer can be laid down in

advance. There are several national and regional standards, Cuban, Puerto Rican, northern Mexican, Colombian, etc.; in many communities there is a range of varieties from a standard to colloquial vernacular and an argot, as well as a way of mingling Spanish and English in conversation that can count as a special variety among intimates. The attitudes of Spanish-speakers toward the elements of this complex language situation are themselves complex. Clearly it is not enough to advocate "Spanish." It is possible to have Anglo children doing well, Spanish-speaking children doing poorly in a Spanish class in a school. There are problems of the fit or conflict between the Spanish spoken by children and the Spanish taught, between community and teacher attitudes, between the language-linked aspirations of cultural traditionalists and the job linked aspirations of some of the working class; the desire of some speakers to institutionalize Spanish as a language of higher education and professional activity, versus the needs of children for whom Spanish is primarily a vernacular of the home and community; problems of children educated in Puerto Rico coming to the mainland with inadequate English and children educated on the mainland going to Puerto Rico with inadequate Spanish.

There are problems of assessing the language abilities of children both for assignment to classes and for evaluation in programs. Assignment to classes is sometimes being done under mandate of law in a begrudging rough-and-ready fashion, minimizing the number of children to be assigned. Sometimes the availability of monies to a district prompts forced assignment to special classes of bilingual children who have no English problem at all. Valid assessments of language ability require naturalistic observation across a range of settings, but such methods have been little developed in explicit form. Formative evaluation of programs in bilingual situations needs ethnographic knowledge of the community language situation, and summative evaluation needs ethnographic monitoring of the process by which a program comes to have particular meanings and outcomes for participants and community. Such success as bilingual programs have, will be best attested in the debates ahead, not by test scores, but by case-history accounts that show convincingly the benefits to children and communities, and how they were achieved.[6]

Ethnic Heritage and Usages of Language

The situations of Black Americans, Native Americans, Spanish-speaking Americans are salient but not unique. Bilingual education is an issue for communities of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and others. Many European languages in addition to Spanish are maintained to a significant extent. Immigration renews some of these communities. All of them participate in a climate of opinion that is world-wide. The general truth would seem to be that about twenty years ago, when those who spoke in the limelight foresaw an end to ideology, and an endless technocratic future whose chief problem would be leisure, many ordinary people around the world were drawing a different lesson from their experience. They had been caught up in such a vision of the post-war future for a while, only to begin to find that their place in it was not worth the giving up of all that they had been. 'Progress' came more and more to seem the 'dirty word' that Kenneth Burke has called it—less an engine carrying then onward and upward, more a juggernaut about to run over them, their place, their customs, their speech.

This general revival of concern with ethnic heritage is not merely a part of the annual tourist laundry ring around the world, each countryside emptying out in summer to take in someone else's carefully staged culture while on vacation. It is a shift in outlook that has to do with what one is for oneself, as a member of a family with a certain name, a certain history, a knowledge of certain places, certain ways

of meeting sorrow and sharing joy. Many of you may know personally the price that can be exacted in acquiring a lingua franca at the cost of a language of the home.

Some repudiate concern of this kind as nostalgia and sentimentality, even as a dangerous refusal to face present realities. I think that something profound is involved. Any one concern may seem particularistic and limiting; when all such concerns are considered together, one sees something general, a deep-running tide. It is a vision limited to a national lingua franca that begins to appear old-fashioned, limited, sectarian.

The deep-running tide seems to me a shift in what is regarded as the dominant obstacle to a way of life in balance with human needs. A century, even a generation ago, it was common to think that the dominant obstacle consisted of traditional ideas and customs. Except when compartmentalized in diminished form, as objects of intermittent piety and curiosity, specific cultural traditions, beliefs, conventions, identities, seemed brakes from the past on progress. The future lay with a science and mode of production that could realize the control of nature, and the plenty, of which mankind was capable. Now we are far less sure. Some critics of contemporary society consider the very idea of incessant technological change to be itself the dominant obstacle to a way of life in balance with human needs. Not that material progress is irrelevant, but that the quality of life is seen more clearly to depend on other things as well. What seemed a policy in the interest of all has come to seem an instrument of profit to some at the expense of others in many cases. Uncontrolled, it threatens community today and even sustenance tomorrow.

There is an essential linguistic dimension to this. It is hard to specify, but necessary to address. Let me try to suggest something of its nature.

The internal structures of language and the structures of use to which languages are shaped alike show two fundamental, complementary general kinds of function, of meaning, at work. They are intertwined in reality, but our way of thinking about language has separated and opposed them.[7] One can be roughly indicated as concerned with naming, reference, sheer statement, the technical, analytic, logical uses of language. Modern linguistics has built its models on this aspect of language. Modern science, technology, and rationalized bureaucracy give its preeminence. For a time the uses of language characteristic of literature, religion, personal expression, were neglected and on the defensive. For a time the pinnacle of knowledge appeared to many to be a single logical language to which all science and legitimate knowledge might be reduced. That ideal has been largely given up and replaced by recognition of a plurality of legitimate uses of language. The seminal figures in philosophy of course were Cassirer and Wittgenstein, and there have been related developments in poetics, anthropology, sociology. Interpersonal, expressive, aesthetic uses of language come more to the fore. In part it is because an ideal of language that seemed the touchstone of progress, of the advance of reason, has been too often traduced. The idioms of objective knowledge, of science, mathematics, logic, experiment, statistics, contracts, regulation and control were once seen as common bases for progress for us all. We have too often seen claims to authority, couched in such idioms, turn out to be rationalizations of special interests, elite excuses, outright deceptions, as with the Vietnamese war. Idioms of moral concern and personal knowledge that had at first no standing came to be seen as more accurate guides than the trappings of elaborate studies and reports. A little later it was general discovery of the personal voice through transcripts of tapes that decided, I think, the public verdict on a president. I could not prove the point, but I think these two experiences have had complementary, decisive effect on our sense of validity in the use of language.

I sense a more general drift as well. Increasingly we are concerned to have a place for things that cannot be said without distortion, or even said at all, in the idioms of elaborated, formal, purportedly rational and referential speech that take pride of place in public science, public government, linguistic and pedagogical grammars. There are things we know and need to be that have no standing there. A sense of this is a reflection of the central problem of the role of language in modern society, the crisis of language, namely, what the balance is to be between modes of use of language. The old dichotomies—correct vs. incorrect, rational vs. emotional, referential vs. expressive, fail to capture the nature and complexity of the problem, for it is not a matter of mutually exclusive opposites, but of the interweaving of mutually indispensable functions.

Education and Linguistic Foundations

I am sorry not to be precise, concrete and clear about this. It would require far more than one lecture to try to explain the ramifications of this point for the study of language, to trace the implications at different levels of the organization of language, to appraise the efforts that are being made now to devise an adequate general model. I can try to say clearly what this complex situation means for the future of language in education. It is this. Linguistics developed out of a situation in which the study of language was loosely distributed across a variety of disciplines. It became the central discipline by development of general methods for the formal study of language structure. The methods and the associated conception of language structure focused on an essential, but partial, aspect of the organization of language. Other aspects remained secondary or eschewed. The focus of attention, having started with phonology, and proceeded through morphology and syntax, has now reached semantics and even 'pragmatics', (that is, the interpretation of meaning in context of use). From every side it begins to be recognized that linguistics as we have known it is inevitably part of a larger field.[8]

At the first, language structure was divorced from language use. Now language use is included along with language structure by most. Eventually it will be generally recognized that it is not use that is a derivative of structure, but structure that is dependent on use. That one can never solve the problems of the organization of language in social life without starting from social life, from the patterns of activity and meaning within which linguistic features are organized into styles and ways of speaking. A linguistics that is truly the science of language, linguistics that is truly a foundation for education, will be a linguistics that is part of the study of communicative interaction. It will understand linguistic competence as part of communicative competence. It will understand the character of competence in relation to the social history and social structure that shape it in a given case.

Such a linguistics, should the day arrive, will have an essential property. Its practice and theory will be adequate to all the means employed in speech and all the meanings that speaking (or another use of language) has. Its theory of English phonology will attend not only to the features that make a consonant /p/ instead of /b/, but also to the aspiration that can make the word angry. Its theory of syntax will attend to isolated grammatical sentences as but a special case among the intelligible, acceptable sequences of discourse. Its theory of meaning will attend not only to words and constructions, but also to the meanings inherent in choice of dialect of variety, of conversational or narrative genre, of occasion to speak or be silent. Its theory of competence will go beyond innate and universal abilities to the kinds of competence valued and permitted in a given society, to opportunities and obstacles of access to kinds of competence. It will recognize that the very role of speaking, of

language and use of language, is not the same in every society; that societies differ in their ideals of language and ability in language, that use of language, like sex and eating, is a universal possibility and necessity of society, but without power to determine its place or meaning. Its relative importance among other modes of communication, its role as resource or danger, art or tool, depends on what is made of it.[9] Two things follow. First, the relation between education and linguistics cannot be a matter simply of joining the two as they are now. We do not yet have the kind of linguistics just described. Second, we are not likely to get it if linguistics is left to itself. The prestige of formal models as against empirical inquiry remains strong. The pull to continue to concentrate on familiar ground will be great. To get the linguistics we need will take pushing by others. Educators ought to be in the forefront. If you should remember just one thing from this occasion, please remember this: Do ask yourself what linguistics can do for you, but even more, demand linguistics that what it can do *be* done. And do not apologize for the demand, or assume that it diverts the study of language from pure science to murky application. The fact is that the study of language does not now have the knowledge on which much of application should be based, and cannot get it without new theoretical, methodological, and empirical work. To demand attention to the needs of education is not just a demand for applied linguistics. It is a demand for change in the foundations of linguistics. The struggle for educational change with regard to language, and the struggle for scientific adequacy in the study of language, are interdependent.

I have used the word 'struggle' advisedly. It would be misleading to suggest that the kind of linguistics we need is an apple almost ripe, ready to drop at a tweak of the stem. There is indeed a diffused slow drift in the right direction, such that work entwined with practical problems has low status, such that the more abstract and remote from practical problems, the higher the status. Some leading linguists, such as William Labov, want to reverse this polarity. Educators can help, and may have some leverage these days when conventional positions for linguists are hard to find. The fact that linguistics itself is evolving in a direction that makes work in educational settings germane is a help, as is the fact, just mentioned, that new theory is part of what is needed. Still, a second great difficulty remains. This is the difficulty of seeing language in education in the context of American society, steadily and whole.

Seeing our Language Situation

The history of attention to language situations within the country points up the difficulty. Black uses of English have been evolving in the United States since before the Revolution, but have begun to be adequately studied only as a consequence of the Civil Rights Movement and the federal attention and funding that responded to it. Spanish has been here for centuries as well, but Spanish bilingualism and language situations have begun to be studied adequately only as a result of the socio-political mobilization of Spanish-speakers. American Indian communities have had multilingual situations and distinctive ways of speaking for generations without much attention. The interest of many Indian people in maintaining and reviving traditional languages fits into the traditional approach to the study of Indian languages, but it has taken the Native American mobilization of recent years to make academic scholars think of the preparation of materials useful in education as something they should do. Indian English and ways of speaking still remain relatively little studied.

In general, educationally significant aspects of a language situation have come into focus only after the community in question has been defined as a social problem, and more especially, as a social force. Previous attention to the languages involved focused upon what seemed most exotic and remote. Immigrant and Indian languages alike have been viewed mostly as something lingering from the past.

We need to begin to think of the linguistic heterogeneity of our country as continuously present. The United States *is* a multilingual country, with great numbers of users of many languages. American multilingualism is not an aberration or a residue. If anything, it has increased in recent years, especially with regard to Spanish, Vietnamese and perhaps a few other languages. We need to address the linguistic heterogeneity of our country as a permanent feature of it, discuss what shape it will and should have, anticipate the future. To do so, we have to address the linguistic ethnography of the United States as sustained, central scientific task. Ad hoc responses after the fact of social mobilization connected with language come too late and provide too little help. And ad hoc responses are too easily distorted by the immediate terms of social and political issues. Members of language communities themselves may have a partial view. We need sustained work that provides both knowledge of language situations and an independent, critical assessment of language problems.

Educators have a stake in the mounting of such a program of study, since mobilization around issues of language so commonly turns attention to schools. Educators have a special stake in making sure that a sustained program of study includes independent, critical attention to the nature of language problems. That attention should include study of the process by which something having to do with language does (or does not) become defined as a problem in our country in the first place. It is not to be assumed that there is a fit between public recognition of problems and actual language situation. (To repeat, teacher failure to recognize the structure and role of Black English Vernacular still handicaps many Black children, and did even more before it became recognized as a 'problem' in the 1960's. Some of those who resist such recognition continue to be Black.)

I suspect there are four kinds of case. That is, there are indeed situations recognized as problems that are genuinely problems (bilingual education, for example); there may well be situations not defined as problems that can be left alone. But I suspect that there are also situations not now defined as problems that ought to be so defined—situations taken for granted but at possible cost. For example, very little has been done to study communication in medical settings, especially between professional personnel and patients.[10] What are the effects of difference in idiom, terminology, semantic system? or even of difference in native language, there being so many medical personnel of foreign origin? and in some regions so many patients with little command of English? Perhaps there is no recognized problem because those affected have little visibility or consciousness of common concern. Yet a series of articles in the New York Times might make this situation, itself unchanged, suddenly a 'problem'. Finally, there may be situations defined as problems that ought not to be, the issue being falsely or superficially posed—e.g., the supposed problem of children with practically 'no language'. Any of us may be subject to cultural blinders and public fashions. We need comparative, critical, historical perspective to transcend them.

We need, in short, to be able to see our country in terms of language, steadily and whole. To do so is to go beyond questions of diversity of languages and language-varieties. Black-English, Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Spanish, Italian, German, Slovenian, the many, many languages of this country are salient and important. The

diversity they comprise is so great, so neglected, as to be almost overwhelming by itself. Yet there is something further. There is a unity that has also escaped us. I do not mean political and social unity. That is not in question. To be sure, the drive for homogeneity has been so great that even today the thought of diversity being accepted can frighten some. Street signs in Spanish, even in a Spanish-speaking neighborhood, can attract ire. A telephone company may refuse to hire a Spanish-speaking operator, to answer emergency calls, in an area with many Spanish dominant speakers. To argue for recognition of ethnolinguistic diversity seems troubling to many, as if the ties between us were so fragile as to break beneath a crumb of difference. But the forces making for integration, the economic and communicative ties of the country, are irreversibly dominant. To argue the right to diversity is to argue only for breathing space within the hive.

The unity in terms of which we need to see our country is the unity in its dominant groups and institutions that gives it a certain cut and pattern, regarding language, regarding the value on language, the way in which language enters into life. We need to be able to imagine the United States sociologically as if it were a small country, a Belgium or Switzerland, a single entity of which one could ask, as one can ask of any society: what are the basic patterns of the use of language? what are the values, rights, responsibilities, associated with language? what is the outlook of the culture with regard to language? how did it come to be that way? how does it seem likely to change?

We are able to think of the Navajo or the French in this way. We need to be able to imagine ourselves in this way as well, to find, through comparative, historical and descriptive study, a mirror in which to see the United States as possessed throughout its history of language policies, of predominant attitudes towards language and its role, that give it one place among many possible places in the roster of the world's cultures.

Even if there were only English the unity to be seen is not simple. Imagine that the only language in the country was English, even standard English. Situations, roles, activities, personal characteristics such as age and sex would still affect and shape ways of using language. The occupational and class structure of the society would still be there as a source of heterogeneity, on the one hand, and hegemony, on the other. Let us consider heterogeneity first.

Inherent heterogeneity. Even if everyone used some form of standard English, all the manifold ways of talking as a person of a certain kind, of using language to do a certain kind of thing, would be present, needing to be discerned and described and their consequences considered. Many of the judgments made of persons in everyday life, many of the opportunities one has or does not have, involve command or lack of command of these styles and genres, of being able to talk like an X, or being able to use language to do Y. Such diversity is inherent in social life. Research has barely begun to address it adequately, relating linguistic devices and patterns to social meanings and roles. It is the same here as with differences of whole language or language-variety. Research mostly follows the flag of social mobilization. Sex-related differences in language hardly appeared for the first time a few years ago. Yet until recently one would have had to conclude that men and women talked alike in every society except for a few American Indian tribes, the Chukchee of Siberia, and some scattered others, so far as the published literature could show. Again, status-related differences in language are hardly the monopoly of the Japanese, Koreans and Javanese, yet until recently linguistic theory treated them as facinatingly special.

There is a general lesson to be drawn. A linguistics that starts from grammar can see socially relevant features only when they intrude within the grammar. If the

very units of phonology or morphology cannot be stated without reference to the sex or status of a participant in speech, then the social fact is taken into account; indeed, the case may become celebrated as an instance of "men's and women's speech" or special concern with the expression of status. Yet sexual roles and status differences are universal in society, and assuredly come into play when people speak to each other. Starting from grammar, one does not see how they come into play; one has to start from the social feature itself, and look at the use of language from its vantage point. Then the features of language that are selected and grouped together as characteristics of speaking like a woman, speaking like an elder, and the like, can be seen.

A final example: many are aware of the interesting ways in which choice of second person pronoun in French (tu: vous), German (Du: Sie), Russian (ty: vy), etc., can signal lesser or greater social distance. Many is the paper written on such pronouns and related forms of salutation and greeting. Yet it is a safe assumption that variation in social distance is universal, and universally expressed in one or another way in use of language. Management of social distance may well be one of the most pervasive dimensions of language use. One has to start from recognition of social distance to begin to see thoroughly and accurately how it is accomplished as a function of language.

Even if only standard English were found in the United States, then, there would be many socially shaped patterns of language use to discover and consider. Still, the diversity would have a certain unity. Not "English", but the history, values, and social structure of the United States would give a characteristic configuration to them.

Hidden Hegemony. Schools would not find their problems of language resolved in the situations we are imagining now. Concern to develop the full potential of each child would lead to recognition of language as involving more than command of a standard. For example, I suspect that there is a pervasive dominant attitude that discourages verbal fluency and expressiveness in white males. It ought to be food for thought that in most known societies it is men who are considered the masters of verbal style, and indeed often trained in its ways, whereas women are subordinated and even disparaged. In our own country, as we know, it is commonly girls who show most verbal ability, who learn to retain foreign languages, etc. Men in public life whose work depends on use of language may be heard to disclaim any special knowledge or command of it. The hint of homosexuality seems not to be far from aesthetic mastery of language in a man. Again, I suspect that many persons spend much of their lives in what might be called 'verbal passing', the maintenance of the public verbal face that is not chosen, but imposed. And that is the fate of narrative skill in our society? There seems some reason to think that the expressivity of traditional narrative styles has often been disapproved by the upwardly mobile and middle class. One sees a loss between generations of a vital narrative style in some people of Indian communities. People continue to relate accounts and narratives, of course, we are storying more and enjoying it less?

Most serious of all, and most difficult for schools perhaps to accept: I suspect that our culture is so oriented toward discrimination among persons on the basis of language that even a society of 200 million speakers of standard English would show a class and occupational structure much like the present one, matched by a hierarchy of fine verbal discriminations. In other words, we must consider the possibility that schools, along with other institutions, have as a latent function the reproduction of the present social order on the apparently impartial ground of language. Given the inherent variability in language and language use, even a society of standard English speakers would show detectible differences in pronunciation,

diction, preferred constructions, and the like. Are we so convinced that language change is language decline (as many of our educated elite appear to be), so predisposed to correctness and correction, that most of that society of standard English speakers would still leave school with a feeling of linguistic insecurity and inferiority?

Perhaps not, but in order to see our society, and the place of language in it, especially the place of language in education in it, we have to ask such questions. To what extent are the inadequacies and senses of inadequacy about language in the society to be explained by the backgrounds and characteristics of those who pass through schools? To what extent are they unwittingly produced by schools themselves?

Equality-Implementation

Perhaps our society can never come closer to equality of opportunity, to a treatment of language in schooling that starts where the child is, that develops the fullest linguistic potential of the child. Still, those are the goals in terms of which one often speaks. It is only that the change required to come closer to them is so pervasive—change in knowledge, change in attitude, ultimately change in social structure itself. Change in what we know can never be enough, yet without it the other changes are impossible. One sees some change in the treatment of Black English Vernacular that would not have come about without the research of the past decade or so. Knowledge of other situations can have effect too, especially in the context of a view of the history and direction of the role of language in the society as a whole.

My call for such knowledge in relation to schools amounts to a call for an educational linguistics, as a major thrust of schools of education, departments of linguistics, and all concerned with language and with education. Let me add that it should be shaped not only by educators and linguistics, but also by members of the communities concerned, teachers and parents both. It is inherent in adequate study of language that one must draw on the knowledge that members of a community already tacitly have, and the same is true for ethnography, for knowledge of ways of speaking in relation to cultural contexts. And insofar as the work to be done involves policies and goals, members of the communities affected must necessarily play a part. The educational linguistics envisioned here is in part a community science.

Such an educational linguistics entails change in both linguistics and education. In a sense, its goal must be to fill what might be called a 'competency' gap. There is a gap in the sense of a lack of persons able to do the kind of research that is needed. The gap exists because the need to fill it has not been recognized, and recognition of the need depends on overcoming a 'competency' gap in another, theoretical sense. Both linguists and educators may use the term 'competence'; the gap between their uses is at the heart of what needs to be changed.

In linguistics the term 'competency' was introduced by Chomsky a decade or so ago. Its ordinary meaning suggested a linguistics that would go beyond language structure to the linguistic abilities of people. The promise proved a bit of hyperbole. The term was used in a reduced sense as equivalent to just what portion of competence involving knowledge of a grammar, and grammar itself was defined in terms of an ideal potentiality, cut off from any actual ability or person. Grammar was to explain the potential knowledge of an amalgamated everyone in general, and of no one in particular. Social considerations were wholly absent from such a 'competency'. The result has been conceptual confusion that has led some to aban-

don the term altogether; others to tinker with it; still others to denounce its use as partisan apologetics ('that's not 'competence' was used to mean 'what you are interested in is not linguistics'). In Chomskyan linguistics, in short, 'competence' has meant an abstract grammatical potential, whose true character and whose relation to realized alike remain quite uncertain. The image of the language-acquiring child has been one of an immaculate innate schemata, capable of generating any thing, unconstrained and unshaped by social life.

In education the terms 'competence' and 'competency-based' have become associated with a quite different conception. The emphasis is upon specific, demonstrable, socially relevant skills. No one can be against demonstrable skills, but there is fear that the notion reduces education to a very limited conception of ability and potential. It suggests an image of an externally shaped repertoire of traits that does not allow for going beyond what is already given. It suggests that success in transmitting basic skills is something that was once in hand, lost, and now to be gone back to.

Each polar notion of 'competence' treats as basic something that is derivative. The simple linguistic notion treats formal grammar as basic, and use of language as unconnected, or dependent, whereas in fact the opposite is the case. What we conceive as grammar is a precipitate of a normative selection from among the ways of speaking, the true verbal repertoire, the full organization of means of speech. Grammar began that way in the service of Hellenistic cultural hegomony and continues that way in the service of a certain conception of science. A valid notion of verbal competence reaches out to include the full organization of means and meaning of speech, and becomes part of a notion of communicative competence.

The notion of 'competence' that has gained currency in education treats distinguishable skills as elementary, underived, whereas any prescribed set of skills is a precipitate of a complex of assumptions and understandings as to the nature of society, its present and future opportunities, and the probable or prescribed relation of a group of students to it. There is a tendency to focus on instrumental, vocational ingredients of verbal skill, perhaps at the expense of the full range of verbal abilities valued and possible.

In both cases the limited notion of competence is bound up, I think, with a limited ability to see the nature of the language situations in the United States. That limitation is academic. I want to suggest that the problem of language in education is not to go back to basics, whether in the grammar of the linguist or the grammar of the schoolbook, but to go forward to fundamentals. How does language come organized for use in the communities from which children come to schools? What are the meaning and values associated with use of language in the many different sectors and strata of the society? What are the actual verbal abilities of children and others across the range of settings they naturally engage? What is the fit, what is the frustration, between abilities and settings—where is an ability frustrated for lack of a setting, a setting unentered for lack of an ability, in what ways are patterns of personal verbal ability shaped by restrictions of access to settings, on the one hand, culturally supported aspirations, on the other?

When we consider where a child is, what its potential is, we are considering abilities for which 'competence' is an excellent word, if we can understand it aright, in something close to its ordinary sense, as mastery of the use of language. To use the notion in education, we need to know the shapes in which mastery comes in the many communities of speaking that make up the country, and we need to be able to relate those shapes to the larger historical and social factors that constrain them. Ethnolinguistic description can at least enable us to see where we truly stand with regard to linguistic competence in the United States. The knowledge it provides is indispensable for those who wish to change where we stand.

To see the need for knowledge of the language situations of our country; to support training and research to obtain such knowledge; to change the relations between linguistics and education, so as to bring into being an educational linguistics that can foster all this—these are the imperatives for change, the fundamentals to which we must move forward.

The key to implementing such changes, I think, is in the hands of Schools of Education. There is little chance of success, little change of results relevant to schools, if educators do not play a principal role in shaping the growing concern of students of language with the social aspects of language. At the University of Pennsylvania we are expanding a Reading and Language Arts program into a general program of Language in Education, and including in it a specialization in Educational Linguistics as a foundational field. The purpose is both to train researchers and to influence the training and outlook of those in other parts of the School. The new program is possible partly because of the cooperation and support of some linguists outside the School. Each School of Education may find its own particular pattern, but a successful pattern ought to have these three ingredients mentioned: training of research specialists, influence on the training and outlook of others, cooperation between educators and linguists.

The greatest challenge to research, the research of greatest benefit to schools now, will be to domesticate and direct the skills of ethnography and descriptive linguistics, of sociolinguistics or ethnolinguistics in broad senses of those terms. We need programs of research that can function within a limited frame of time, say a year, and provide through linguistics ethnography a usable sketch of the ways of speaking of a community or district served by a school. For the most part linguistic ethnography has flourished abroad with studies of cultural uses of language in Mexico, Africa, Panama, the Philippines. We need to bring it home to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The support of Schools of Education will be essential for this. The models of research that are needed are not wholly ready to hand: practical relevance and research development must grow together, in the sort of environment that a School of Education can provide.

It is not too much to imagine, indeed, that language in education can be an integrating focus for many aspects of a School. The ties with Reading and Language Arts, with developmental psychology, with English Studies, are obvious. When one considers the way in which problems of language are shaped by cultural assumptions and attitudes, it becomes apparent that there are ties with the historical, sociological and anthropological foundations of education. There is a complex of spurious and genuine problems of language diversity in relation to special education and school counselling. Issues of curriculum and instruction arise as well. With a bit of luck and a lot of initiative, education might find itself a major force in shaping the study of language in the United States.

NOTES

1. The contribution of each of these men, and something of my debt to them, is indicated in Hymes 1970, 1974, ch. 8, for Sapir; Hymes 1974: 85-86, 121-122, 204, for Marx; 1975, for Jakobson; 1974, ch. 7, for Burke.

3. This point is developed more fully in my Introduction to Cazden et al. (1972). In introducing my lecture, Donald Henderson quoted a very apt passage from that essay, framing what I had to say perfectly, and I am grateful to him for it.

4. See Hoover (1975).

5. The pioneer in this work is William Leap. See his article (1974); a book-length collection of studies of Indian English is now being edited by Leap.

6. I try to address these issues in some detail in a paper called 'Ethnographic Monitoring', written for a symposium on 'Language Development in a Bilingual Setting', March 19-21,

1976, organized by Eugene Briere for the Multilingual/Multicultural Materials Development Center of California State Polytechnic University. Plans for publication are not yet definite.

7. Let me stress that I do not suggest that every aspect of language structure and use can simply be assigned to one or the other of the two generalized types of function. They are not either-or catch-alls. They are interdependent; their nature is not quite the same at one level of language as at another; their manifestations enter into a variety of relationships as between levels of language. The essential point is that an adequate study of language cannot be built on attention to just one of them. I speak of generalized *types* of function because there is no agreement on the specific set required in a model of language structure, and a good many specific functions may need to be recognized, some universal, some local. I do think that at any one level there are fundamentally just two kinds of means, and organization of means, roughly a 'what' and a 'how'. The principle of contrastive relevance within a frame that is basic to linguistics applies to both: the 'same thing' can be said in a set of contrasting ways, and the 'same way' can be used for a set of contrasting 'things'. A key to the organization of language in a particular culture or period is restriction on free combination of 'what's' and 'hows' " the things that must be said in certain ways, the ways that can be used only for certain things. The admissible relations comprise the admissible styles. In effect, the study of language is fundamentally a study of styles. There is further discussion in my Introduction to Cazden et al. (1972) and my essay, "Ways of Speaking", in Bauman and Sherzer (1974).

8. See Hymes 1968.

9. This point should be obvious, yet seems hard to grasp, so deeply ingrained is a contrary assumption. I have been trying to make the point for almost twenty years. See Hymes 1961a, 1961b, 1964a, 1964b, 1974, ch. 6.

10. Roger Shuy has pioneered in this regard. For discussion of the general issue of language problem. I am indebted to members of the Committee on Sociolinguistics of the Social Science Research Council, especially Rolf Kjolseth.

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